

True or False?

Answers

1. There were 559 members of the Guinea Pig Club in total.

FALSE

There were 649 in total. The Guinea Pig Club had a number of requirements in order to become a member. You had to be a member of aircrew with the Royal Air Force or an Allied air force who suffered burns, frostbite or crash related injuries, treated by McIndoe or his team or Maxillo facial surgeons at the Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead. Members also had to have a minimum of 2 operations.

2. McIndoe bought a small plot of land on Mount Kilimanjaro after the war.

TRUE

McIndoe first visited Africa in 1947 and was fascinated by the country. A small area of undeveloped land on the northern face of Mount Kilimanjaro came up for sale in 1950. McIndoe and his friend Robin Johnson bought it, planning to cultivate coffee and cereals. Johnson settled down with a wife and family and lost interest in the project. McIndoe disappointed but he stayed and helped local people who had been injured or fallen ill. During the period of the Mau Mau terror campaign which started in 1952, McIndoe's skills were often called upon.

3. Marks and Spencer advertised in the Guinea Pig newsletter.

TRUE

The Guinea Pig Club Newsletter featured updates from members, articles, cartoons by Henry Standen, photos and advertisements from companies such as Rothmans Cigarettes and Marks and Spencer.

4. In his spare time, McIndoe 'The Maestro' was a conductor.

FALSE

Although his nickname was The Maestro, McIndoe did not spend any time as a conductor.

5. Dame Vera Lynn visited some members of the Guinea Pig club while they were in hospital.

TRUE

Guinea Pigs became celebrities in their own right as McIndoe encouraged celebrities and politicians to meet and socialise with them. It wasn't long before the airmen were being invited to film and theatre premiers. This extended to celebrities such as Clark Gable, Dame Vera Lynn and Winston Churchill visiting Ward III (the burns unit).

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6. When the Queen Victoria Hospital was built on Holtye Road it only had 24 beds.

TRUE

After a few relocations, the Queen Victoria Cottage Hospital as it was then called moved to Holtye Road and was opened on the 8th January 1936. It had 6 male beds, 6 female beds, 6 children's beds in addition to 6 private beds.

7. The Guinea Pig Club annual reunion became known as the "Forgotten Weekend".

FALSE

The Guinea Pig Club had an annual reunion until 2007. These weekend long events saw many pints consumed so they became known as the "Lost Weekend".

8. McIndoe's nickname was The Chief.

FALSE

McIndoe was affectionately called "The Boss" by the Guinea Pigs.

9. Guinea pigs weren't just British, they came from all over the world, including South America.

FALSE.

The team at the Queen Victoria treated pilot from the allied forces which included countries such as Australia, Canada and the United Kindom. But not South America.

10. McIndoe learned everything he knew about plastic surgery from his father, Harold Gillies.

FALSE

McIndoe did learn lots of plastic surgery techniques from Gillies, but he was his Uncle and not his father.